

Claims

- [c1] 1. A method of identifying an object comprising:
providing an object having on a surface thereof at least one layer of paint;
determining a unique discrete identification for the object;
applying the unique discrete identification to the at least one paint layer on the surface with a fluorescent material;
permitting the fluorescent material to migrate into the at least one paint layer, while an excess amount of fluorescent material remains on the at least one paint layer; and
removing the excess amount of fluorescent material from the at least one paint layer with a solvent, such that the unique discrete identification created by fluorescent material migrated into the at least one paint layer is visible at an acute angle to the object surface without use of an ultraviolet light, while being substantially invisible at an angle normal to the object surface.
- [c2] 2. The method of claim 1 wherein the object has thereon a plurality of layers of paint on the surface, and wherein the unique discrete identification is applied to an upper

paint layer and the fluorescent material migrates through the upper paint layer and into at least one lower paint layer, while an excess amount of fluorescent material remains on the upper paint layer.

- [c3] 3. The method of claim 1 wherein the object and fluorescent remain at about room temperature.
- [c4] 4. The method of claim 1 wherein the fluorescent material is a liquid, and the solvent is a non-aqueous solvent.
- [c5] 5. The method of claim 1 wherein the object is a motor vehicle, and the paint layers are over a metallic surface of the vehicle.
- [c6] 6. The method of claim 1 wherein the unique discrete identification is an alphanumeric identification that is applied to the object at a selected unrevealed location thereon.
- [c7] 7. The method of claim 1 wherein the fluorescent material is a liquid, and the unique discrete identification is applied to the paint layer by brush.
- [c8] 8. The method of claim 1 wherein the fluorescent material is a liquid, and the unique discrete identification is applied to the paint layer by use of a stencil containing cut-outs of the discrete identification.

[c9] 9. The method of claim 1 wherein the fluorescent material is a liquid, and the unique discrete identification is applied to the paint layer by use of a stencil containing cut-outs of an alphanumeric identification, and wherein the stencil is created by: a) providing a stencil sheet having an adhesive backing layer attached to a release sheet, b) cutting the alphanumeric identification into the stencil sheet without cutting through the release sheet, c) removing the stencil sheet with cut alphanumeric identification and adhesive backing layer from the release sheet, d) placing the stencil sheet with cut alphanumeric identification and adhesive backing layer onto a second adhesive layer, and e) removing the stencil sheet and adhesive backing layer without the cut alphanumeric identification from the second adhesive layer, creating cut-out openings on the stencil sheet and leaving the cut alphanumeric identification on the second adhesive layer.

[c10] 10. The method of claim 1 wherein the fluorescent material comprises a nonaqueous-based ultraviolet ink.

[c11] 11. The method of claim 1 wherein the paint comprises a urethane-based paint.

[c12] 12. A method of identifying an object comprising:

providing an object having on a surface thereof a plurality of layers of paint;
determining a unique discrete identification for the object;
applying the unique discrete identification to an upper one of the plurality of paint layers with a fluorescent material;
permitting the fluorescent material to migrate through the upper paint layer and into at least one additional paint layer below the upper paint layer, while an excess amount of fluorescent material remains on the upper paint layer; and
removing the excess amount of fluorescent material from the upper paint layer with a solvent, such that the unique discrete identification created by fluorescent material migrated into the at least one additional paint layer remains therein and is visible even upon removal of the upper paint layer.

[c13] 13. The method of claim 12 wherein the unique discrete identification created by fluorescent material migrated into the at least one additional paint layer remains therein and is visible even upon removal of the upper paint layer and application of a further paint layer.

[c14] 14. The method of claim 12 wherein the paint comprises a urethane-based paint.

[c15] 15. A method of identifying an object comprising:
providing an object having on a surface thereof at least one layer of paint;
determining a unique discrete identification for the object;
applying at essentially room temperature the unique discrete identification to the at least one paint layer on the surface with a liquid fluorescent material using a brush;
permitting the fluorescent material to migrate into the at least one paint layer at essentially room temperature, while an excess amount of fluorescent material remains on the at least one paint layer; and
removing the excess amount of fluorescent material from the at least one paint layer with a solvent, such that the unique discrete identification created by fluorescent material migrated into the at least one paint layer is visible.

[c16] 16. The method of claim 15 wherein the paint comprises a urethane-based paint.

[c17] 17. A method of identifying an object comprising:
providing an object having on a surface thereof at least one layer of paint;
determining a unique alphanumeric identification for the object;

creating a stencil of the unique alphanumeric identification by a) providing a stencil sheet having an adhesive backing layer attached to a release sheet, b) cutting the alphanumeric identification into the stencil sheet without cutting through the release sheet, c) removing the stencil sheet with cut alphanumeric identification and adhesive backing layer from the release sheet, d) placing the stencil sheet with cut alphanumeric identification and adhesive backing layer onto a second adhesive layer, and e) removing the stencil sheet and adhesive backing layer without the cut alphanumeric identification from the second adhesive layer, creating cut-out openings on the stencil sheet and leaving the cut alphanumeric identification on the second adhesive layer;

applying the stencil sheet and adhesive backing layer with the cut-out openings to the at least one paint layer on the object surface;

applying a fluorescent material to the stencil sheet through the cut-out openings and on to the at least one paint layer on the surface;

removing the stencil sheet and adhesive backing layer from the object surface, leaving fluorescent material in the form of the unique alphanumeric identification on the at least one paint layer;

permitting the fluorescent material to migrate into the at least one paint layer, while an excess amount of fluores-

cent material remains on the at least one paint layer; and removing the excess amount of fluorescent material from the at least one paint layer, such that the unique alphanumeric identification created by fluorescent material migrated into the at least one paint layer is visible.

[c18] 18. The method of claim 17 wherein the paint comprises a urethane system paint.

[c19] 19. A method of secretly identifying a vehicle comprising:

providing a vehicle having a surface;

selecting a desired, unrevealed location on a portion of the vehicle surface;

determining a unique discrete identification for the object;

applying the unique discrete identification to the unrevealed location on the vehicle surface with a marking fluid not normally visible in daylight when viewed normal to the vehicle surface;

permitting the marking fluid to become embedded in the vehicle surface in the form of the unique discrete identification at the unrevealed location, while leaving an excess amount of the marking fluid on the vehicle surface; removing the excess amount of the marking fluid on the vehicle surface, such that the unique discrete identification formed by the embedded marking fluid in the vehi-

cle surface is visible at the unrevealed location at an acute angle to the vehicle surface or by use of light other than daylight; and
recording the unique discrete identification and the unrevealed location on the vehicle surface in a searchable database for retrieval in the event that the vehicle needs to be identified.

[c20] 20. The method of claim 19 wherein the vehicle surface comprises metal, and the unique discrete identification formed by the marking fluid is embedded in the metal.

[c21] 21. The method of claim 19 wherein the vehicle surface comprises a painted surface, and the unique discrete identification formed by the marking fluid is embedded in the paint on the surface.

[c22] 22. The method of claim 19 wherein the vehicle surface comprises a surface painted with a urethane-based paint, and the unique discrete identification formed by the marking fluid is embedded in the paint on the surface.

[c23] 23. The method of claim 19 wherein the vehicle surface comprises fiberglass, and the unique discrete identification formed by the marking fluid is embedded in the fiberglass.

